Approved for Release: 2025/05/12 C02202000

CONFIDENTIAL
Security Information

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD 26 August 1952

FROM: Assistant to the Director

SUBJECT: Visit of Landrum Bolling, Editor, and Kay Sisto, Managing Editor, OVERSEAS NEWS AGENCY.

1. Landrum Bolling formerly an ONA foreign correspondent has, in company with another backer, purchased the Overseas News Agency from H. R. Wishengrad as of May 1952. ONA was formerly known as a prejudiced agency within the trade. It was heavily financed by Zionist capital and affiliated in an intimate if unofficial capacity with the Jewish Telegraph Agency. Bolling reports that he has broken with the past, has thoroughly scrubbed out the agency, and has cleaned up the staff. ONA markets its service to approximately 40 newspapers in the United States. It depends for its news gathering on stringers abroad, generally utilizing the better-known and more competent correspondents of other newspapers and agencies. ONA relies heavily upon British foreign correspondents.

2. The agency is now in a reasonably precarious financial position, and Bolling is concentrating his efforts on a build-up of subscribers. It markets 5 reports by airmail each week including an Iron Curtain report. Charges range from approximately $100 a week for the principal subscriber down to a minimal scale.

3. Bolling came to us after having talked to State on two principal problems:

a) He is interested in developing more stringers and getting access to further information for his services abroad particularly in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. I indicated that CIA could not help him make these contacts, and I likewise asserted that CIA would not under any circumstances whatsoever provide information. He recognized the validity of this position.

b) Bolling believes that there is need for the development of subscribers to an independent American news service overseas, particularly in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, North Africa, and Southeast Asia. He believes that his organization is uniquely qualified to do the job

Declassified Class. Change to: TS S C
Auth: HR 70-2 Date: 3-11-21 By: 37

CONFIDENTIAL
Security Information

Approved for Release: 2025/05/12 C02202000

Approved for Release: 2025/05/12 C02202000

since it deals primarily in feature commentaries and interpretive articles. He asserts that most newspapers are adequately supplied with "on-th-spot" wire news either as subscribers to the principal wire services or as highjackers of radioed news. Bolling does not believe the State Department is doing a completely satisfactory job particularly in the Middle East, and contends that if editors there were offered a legitimate foreign service at a price they could afford, they would be happier to take their news from an agency rather than from an official arm of the US government.

Bolling has propositioned the Ford Foundation on a plan to underwrite the cost of this news distribution since it obviously cannot be maintained on a sound economic footing. He proposes that the Ford Foundation establish an eleemosynary organization for the collection and editing of news which would benefit the Western world if published abroad. This organization would then contract for the distribution of its product to subscribers abroad through the offices of ONA. He wanted us to be informed on this proposition in the event the Ford Foundation queries us on our views.

4. As a parting shot, Miss Sisto asked if CIA might be interested in subscribing to the ONA service. I told her I doubted that it would be useful to us but that I would sound out our people on it.

5. Attached are a few offsets on ONA material together with a couple of weekly reports and a copy of ONA's proposal to the Ford Foundation.

signed

C. B. HANSEN
Colonel, USAF

ODCI/CBH/hnb

CC: 1 - DD/I
1 - DD/A ✓ and copy of Proposal
1 - General Counsel

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Security Information

Approved for Release: 2025/05/12 C02202000